



## ***AOT in Action***

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

### **A Message from Director Sherry Henry:**

---

Good afternoon,

AOT is announcing our latest Arizona Tourism University workshop, ***How to Creatively Market Your Destination's Culture and Charisma***. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn from an industry expert on how to develop unique marketing strategies for your destination that effectively reaches your target market! For more information, please read the **AOT News** section below.

In sporting news... it's time to get outside and play ball! As one of our state's most vibrant tourism assets, Cactus League spring training games generate an economic benefit that resonates throughout all of Arizona. Last year, more than 1.5 million fans attended spring training games generating nearly \$360 million in economic impact for our state.

To encourage Cactus League attendees to take advantage of their time, extend their visit and travel around Arizona, we're encouraging them to visit [www.discoverazspringtraining.com](http://www.discoverazspringtraining.com). This website offers information on what to see and do around the league's 10 baseball fields in addition to travel adventures throughout the entire state such as road trips, outdoor adventures, golf activities, spas, nightlife and dining experiences.

For more information about Cactus League Spring Training and a schedule of games, visit [www.cactusleague.com](http://www.cactusleague.com).

Have a great week!

Sherry Henry  
Director, Arizona Office of Tourism

---

## AOT News

### Learn How to Develop Unique Marketing Strategies through AOT's New Workshop Series

Struggling with your attraction's marketing efforts? Join us for AOT's next Arizona Tourism University workshop series and learn ***How to Creatively Market Your Destination's Culture and Charisma***. This informative workshop will focus on how to develop destination marketing plans and creatively reach your region's target demographic.

Independent marketing consultant, Susan Sternitzke of the [LimeLight Creative Group](#), will present the workshop material, provide examples of creative campaigns and facilitate an interactive session to develop ideas and strategies for attendees' destinations. Prior to her consultation work, Susan led the marketing initiatives for the Yuma Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Don't miss this opportunity to learn how to develop creative and unique marketing plans for your destination!

Be sure to review the complete [FY12 ATU schedule](#) for information on future ATU workshops.

***All workshops are complimentary!***

#### March 21

[Camp Verde Town Hall](#)

Room 206/207  
395 S Main Street  
Camp Verde, AZ

#### March 28

[La Hacienda de Sonoita](#)

34 Swanson Road  
Sonoita, AZ

#### March 30

Webinar

To register for the workshops, please visit the link below.

<http://www.azot.gov/marketing-programs/arizona-tourism-university/workshop-registration>

For more information, contact Glenn Schlottman, Community Relations Manager, 602-364-3727 or via email at [gschlottman@azot.gov](mailto:gschlottman@azot.gov).

### Arizona's Leading Visitor Resource Now Available!

Abundant with valuable Arizona tourist information from traveling tips to statewide accommodations, the Arizona Office of Tourism has released its ***2012 Arizona Official State***

**Visitor's Guide** (OSVG), along with the accompanying **Official State Visitor's Map**. >> [Read Full Article](#)

### **AOT's Mobile Site Wins ADDY!**

AOT's mobile-friendly website received a Gold ADDY award during the 26th annual ADDY® Awards ceremony held in Tucson last week and sponsored by the American Advertising Federation of Metro Phoenix. The Gold ADDY is recognition of the highest level of creative excellence and is judged to be superior to all other entries in the competition. The ADDYs is one of the largest and most prestigious national competitions recognizing creative excellence in advertising.

We want to thank our marketing partners [Madden Media](#) who collaborated with us on the concept, design and execution of this site. This dynamic partnership certainly contributed to the success of the campaign.

The ADDYs® are the advertising industry's largest and most representative competition, attracting over 50,000 entries every year in local ADDY® competitions. The mission of the ADDY® competition is to recognize and reward creative excellence in the art of advertising.

---

## **Upcoming Events & Activities**

### **[AZAP FAM Tour](#)**

Date: April 10-15

Location: TBA

### **[New York Media Mission](#)**

Date: April 16 – 20

Location: New York City, NY

### **[US Travel Association's International Pow Wow](#)**

Date: April 21 – 25

Location: Los Angeles, CA

---

## **Industry News**

### **TripAdvisor Survey Shows U.S. Hotels Are Optimistic About 2012**

TripAdvisor, Inc. unveiled the results of its annual TripAdvisor Industry Index incorporating responses from more than 9,000 accommodation owners and managers worldwide, including 1,276 in the U.S. The Index measures the industry's outlook for the year ahead. Among the survey's key findings: 65 percent of U.S. respondents are optimistic about the prospect of an economic recovery in 2012, up 27 percent than the global average of 38 percent.

U.S. respondents also expressed a bullish outlook on their own profitability in 2012. Seventy-six percent said they expect their businesses to be more profitable in 2012 than they were in 2011,

as compared to a global average of 58 percent. This optimism extended to hiring plans. Twenty-seven percent of U.S. respondents said they are planning to create new jobs in 2012, while the global industry average was slightly lower at 22 percent.

"The TripAdvisor Industry Index reveals an economic optimism among U.S. accommodation owners which reflects data showing one-third of U.S. travelers are planning to increase travel spending in 2012," said Christine Petersen, president of TripAdvisor for Business. Some of the top hotel trends cited in the TripAdvisor Industry Index include

**Social Media:** 52 percent of U.S. hoteliers expect their social media marketing budget to increase in 2012, compared with 50 percent in the rest of the world; 80 percent plan to monitor social media for mentions of the property, compared with 76 percent in the rest of the world; 91 percent plan to respond to guest reviews about their property on TripAdvisor compared with 87 percent in the rest of the world.

**Mobile:** 61 percent of U.S. hoteliers plan to offer a program to engage travelers using mobile devices (e.g., a mobile app, special offers on mobile, booking through a mobile device) in 2012, compared to 53 percent in the rest of the world; 27 percent plan to offer a program to engage travelers using mobile devices for the first time in 2012, compared to 28 percent in the rest of the world.

**Property Investments: Renovations and Acquisitions:** 13 percent of U.S. hoteliers are planning to purchase or build new properties in 2012, compared with 17 percent in the rest of the world.

**Services and Amenities:** 28 percent of U.S. hoteliers plan to add services or amenities in 2012, compared with 38 percent in the rest of the world; 10 percent foresee adding fees for services or amenities in 2012, compared with 15 percent in the rest of the world; 89 percent plan to offer free in-room Internet access to guests in 2012, compared with 77 percent in the rest of the world.

**Top Deals and Special Offers:** 59 percent of U.S. hoteliers plan to offer discounts on rooms, compared with 52 percent in the rest of the world; 58 percent plan to offer special amenities/services (e.g., free Wi-Fi Internet access), compared with 56 percent in the rest of the world; 38 percent plan to offer free parking, compared with 32 percent in the rest of the world.

"Hoteliers' plans to engage with travelers using social media and mobile devices are also important trends this year," said Petersen. "While it's encouraging to see so many planning to respond to online guest reviews in 2012, TripAdvisor's data show that only 15 percent of property reviews currently have management responses. The owners and managers who follow through on plans to respond to reviews will have an advantage over their competition." For the full report, click on [TripAdvisor Industry Index](#). (*Travel Pulse*, February 21)

### **STR: US performance for January Increases**

The U.S. hotel industry in January reported increases in all three key performance metrics, according to data from STR. Overall, the U.S. hotel industry's occupancy rose 4.1 percent to 49.4 percent, its average daily rate was up 3.9 percent to US\$100.74 and its revenue per available room increased 8.1 percent to US\$49.78.

“Even with tougher comparisons to start the year, January demand for hotel rooms was impressive,” said Amanda Hite, president of STR. “The lack of new hotel rooms (supply) also remains favorable. We expect the first quarter to provide a good bellwether for overall industry performance in 2012.”

Among the Top 25 markets, Chicago, Illinois, rose 15.4 percent in occupancy to 47.4 percent, posting the largest increase in that metric, followed by Nashville, Tennessee (+11.2 percent to 51.2 percent), and Anaheim-Santa Ana, California (+10.0 percent to 62.5 percent). Phoenix, Arizona, fell 5.9 percent in occupancy to 58.7 percent, reporting the largest decrease in that metric.

Three markets experienced double-digit ADR increases: New Orleans, Louisiana (+24.1 percent to US\$145.16); Oahu Island, Hawaii (+10.7 percent to US\$181.42); and San Francisco/San Mateo (+10.4 percent to US\$157.48). Two markets reported ADR decreases for the week: New York, New York (-3.1 percent to US\$188.05), and Washington, D.C. (-2.0 percent to US\$129.65).

Four markets achieved RevPAR increases of more than 15 percent: New Orleans (+32.1 percent to US\$87.57); Chicago (+24.3 percent to US\$46.39); Oahu Island (+18.9 percent to US\$157.88); and Miami-Hialeah, Florida (+15.8 percent to US\$148.71). Phoenix (-4.8 percent to US\$69.62) and Washington, D.C. (-3.1 percent to US\$62.99) reported the only RevPAR decreases for the month. (*HotelNewsNow.com, February 21*)

### **Shifflet Survey Shows Americans Plan to Travel More, Spend Less**

Americans say they plan to travel this spring but they will try to economize, according to a national survey by D.K. Shifflet & Associates. While both measures are up over 2011, the net increase for leisure travel is greater than planned spending, indicating that travelers plan to travel more and spend less. It is notable that a significant proportion of Americans remain unsure about their leisure travel intentions.

“Given the high level of travel uncertainty coupled with the positive direction of leisure travel, it’s not surprising that flash sales and daily deals are catching on with the American consumer” said Chris Klauda, vice president at D.K. Shifflet & Associates. (*Travel Pulse, February 23*)

### **Toolkit for National Travel and Tourism Week Now Available**

The Toolkit for National Travel and Tourism Week is now available from the U.S. Travel Association. National Travel and Tourism Week (NTTW), which will be held May 5-13, 2012, provides a fitting occasion to shine the spotlight on the travel and tourism industry. Visit [www.ustravel.org](http://www.ustravel.org) for information.

### **Park Concessioner Grand Canyon Railway Recently Received NPS Director’s Environmental Achievement Award**

Grand Canyon National Park (GRCA) concessioner Grand Canyon Railway (owned and operated by Xanterra Parks and Resorts) was recently awarded the National Park Service’s (NPS) Environmental Achievement Award in the Lean, Clean and Green category.

The Lean, Clean and Green Award recognizes NPS teams or partners for outstanding achievements in building or fleet energy efficiency, or renewable energy development and

deployment. Grand Canyon Railway's (GCR) award stemmed from their recent conversion of an inefficient, 1923 Baldwin steam locomotive from diesel fuel to clean-burning, waste vegetable oil (WVO). This renewable energy source is a waste product generated, in part, by Xanterra and GCR food-service facilities. For more on Grand Canyon National Park, visit the park's web site at [www.nps.gov/grca](http://www.nps.gov/grca).

---

### **Calendar of Events**

Visit [www.ArizonaGuide.com](http://www.ArizonaGuide.com) to find information on all the exciting [events, festivals and activities](#) held throughout the Grand Canyon State!

### **Connect with the Arizona Office of Tourism!**

Become a fan on Facebook! <http://www.facebook.com/arizonatravel>

Follow us on Twitter! <http://twitter.com/ArizonaTourism>